The Progressive Review

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Why Dr. Elders was right: drugs and public health

Eric Sterling

A couple of months before Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders became the highest ranking public official to suggest that the legalization of drugs should be studied, Eric Sterling, president of the Criminal Justice Policy Foundation, wrote her a memo outlining public health aspects of the drug problem. Here are some excerpts:

Effect on murder and death from overdose

The American strategy to address drug abuse has, since the early 1980s, been characterized as the 'war on-drugs.' Most Americans recognize that our strategy has largely failed to address key issues. The costs and consequences of prohibition on drug production and distribution are multi-fold.

One of the most horrific results of the prohibition approach is the loss of life. In the absence of government regulation, the American drug trade remains in the hands of frequently violent criminals. As a result, many innocent people are killed by drug traffickers in competition for business.

Many people also die from drug overdoses (4,242 persons in 1991). Because of prohibition there are no regulatory controls on the manufacture, packaging or distribution of illegal drugs. Consequently, overdoses from batches of illegal drugs of unknown strength are widespread. Sixty-one percent of the emergency room episodes in 1990 were for overdoses. Poisoning from contaminated illegal drugs are also widespread.

Prohibition produces more crime. Drug users frequently resort to robberies, burglaries, shoplifting, embezzlement, fraud, and prostitution in order to raise enough money to buy drugs sold at prohibition-inflated prices. Twenty-six percent of prison inmates convicted of property offenses reported in a 1991 survey that they committed the offense for which they were incarcerated to get money to buy drugs. This was true for 30% of the burglars and 31% of those convicted of larceny.

Effect on legal drugs needed by patients

There are more pharmacy robberies and thefts. Use of legal pharmaceutical narcotics poses much lower health risks to illegal users than the use of "street" drugs because their strength and purity are dependable. For example, legitimate pharmaceutical pain relievers like Percodan or Dilaudid, which substitute for heroin, are very popular among addicts as the pills are of known strength and purity. Moreover, such well-marked dosages are significantly more valuable on the street drug market than heroin, selling for as much as $60 per pill. Consequently, they are often stolen from pharmacies, either for use by the thief or for profitable resale.

All of these circumstances mean that patients who legitimately need these legal drugs -- extremely important in the treatment of pain -- find them much harder to obtain. These consequences are aggravated by a strict prohibition approach toward the use of such drugs. Reportedly pharmacies in some neighborhoods will not carry drugs like Percodan and Dilaudid so as to discourage robberies and burglaries. In addition, to prevent prescription diversion of these drugs, regulators require physicians to use triplicate prescription blanks. Many physicians fear that prescribing such drugs may subject them to regulatory scrutiny or even harassment. Thus, patients needing pain relief are less likely to get It. This has been confirmed by the World Health Organization as an international problem, and it is a serious problem throughout the United States.

The increased risk to pharmacies and wholesalers of carrying such prescription painkillers makes them more

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The Progressive Review

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expensive to legal customers. The increased price, plus the increased security costs, plus the cost of stolen inventory, all result in higher costs to insurance companies, which means higher health insurance premiums for all of us. This problem is further exacerbated by false medical claims filed by addicts in order to obtain drugs. The false medical claims become false health insurance claims, again increasing costs and premiums.

Effect on spread of HIV, hepatitis and other diseases

One of the biggest consequences of the prohibition approach to drugs is the extensive spread of HIV and other blood borne diseases such as hepatitis. IV syringes, i.e. needles, are classified as drug paraphernalia, and are hence illegal. That makes clean injection equipment scarcer and more expensive, and discourages addicts from carrying their own. Possession of needles, because it is illegal, is probable cause for arrest.

The National Commission on HIV and AIDS has called for clean-needle exchanges as an HIV transmission prevention measure. However, 'war on drugs' doctrine considers sending the right "message" to be of paramount importance. The 'message' that sale and possession of injection equipment is prohibited is more important than preventing the spread of HIV through the sharing of needles. Consequently, the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 denies any drug treatment funds to states which distribute sterile needles or bleach to clean needles. Nevertheless, a growing number of American cities have recognized the importance of needle exchange and have adopted programs. According to recent University of California study, there are 37 needle exchange programs operating at over 100 sites nation-wide.

The nation's blood supply is put at somewhat greater risk for spreading HIV and hepatitis because addicts sometimes can successfully sell their blood to buy expensive illegal drugs. In recent years, the commercial purchase of blood has been greatly reduced, but it still is done, almost exclusively for plasma extraction. Programs to carefully trace blood have also served to deter drug addicts from selling blood. Even though very reliable screening systems are in place to test blood - 99.9% reliable- they are not fool proof. Addict sales of blood for a long time were a way for them to afford to purchase drugs sold at prohibition-inflated prices.

Drug prohibition leads to the spread of sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV, hepatitis, syphilis, and gonorrhea through prostitution engaged in to raise money to pay for expensive illegal drugs. Between 1985 and 1988 heterosexual syphilis increased in Washington, DC by 91 %, and in Philadelphia by 200%. In Washington, in the same period, penicillin-resistant gonorrhea increased by 300%. In 16 rural counties in Georgia, new syphilis cases increased by 800% between 1985 and 1988 due to crack use.

Treatment of HIV+ drug users who are sick or injured increases risk of accidental infection to health care workers such as EMTs, surgical and emergency room staff. The risk of HIV infection reportedly has discouraged health care workers from entering such fields.

Effect on health of drug users

Drug users avoid medical treatment because their illegal drug use may be detected in an examination and reported to law enforcement authorities. Untreated, their medical conditions become more severe and more

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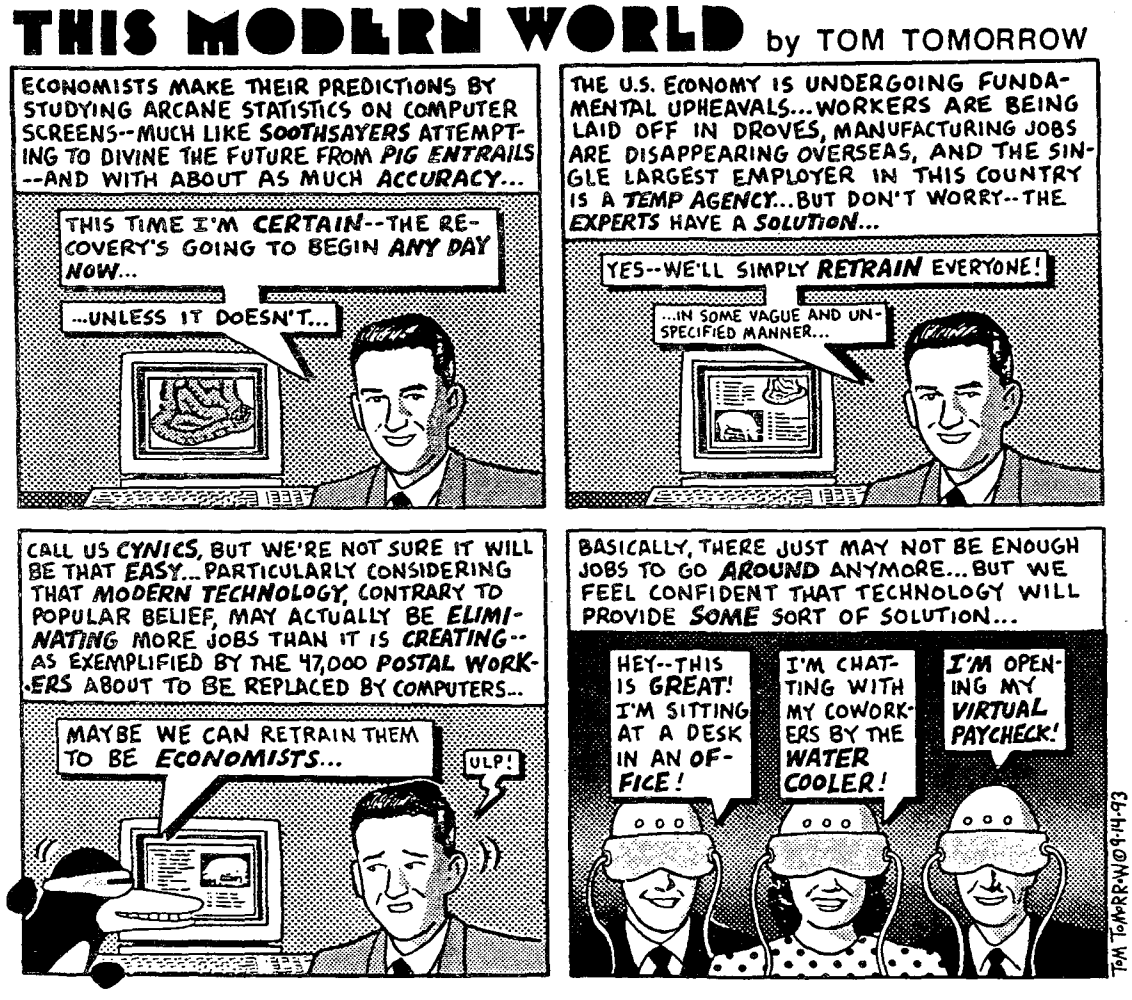
THIS MODERN WORLD by TOM TOMORROW
ECONOMISTS MAKE THEIR PREDICTIONS BY STUDYING ARCANE STATISTICS ON COMPUTER SCREENS--MUCH LIKE SOOTHSAYERS ATTEMPTING TO DIVINE THE FUTURE FROM PIG ENTRAILS --AND WITH ABOUT AS MUCH ACCURACY...
THIS TIME I'M CERTAIN--THE RECOVERY'S GOING TO BEGIN ANY DAY NOW...
...UNLESS IT DOESN'T...
THE U.S. ECONOMY IS UNDERGOING FUNDAMENTAL UPHEAVALS...WORKERS ARE BEING LAID OFF IN DROVES, MANUFACTURING JOBS ARE DISAPPEARING OVERSEAS, AND THE SINGLE LARGEST EMPLOYER IN THIS COUNTRY IS A TEMP AGENCY...BUT DON'T WORRY--THE EXPERTS HAVE A SOLUTION...
YES--WE'LL SIMPLY RETRAIN EVERYONE!
...IN SOME VAGUE AND UNSPECIFIED MANNER...
CALL US CYNICS, BUT WE'RE NOT SURE IT WILL BE THAT EASY...PARTICULARLY CONSIDERING THAT MODERN TECHNOLOGY, CONTRARY TO POPULAR BELIEF, MAY ACTUALLY BE ELIMINATING MORE JOBS THAN IT IS CREATING--AS EXEMPLIFIED BY THE 47,000 POSTAL WORKERS ABOUT TO BE REPLACED BY COMPUTERS...
MAYBE WE CAN RETRAIN THEM TO BE ECONOMISTS...
ULP!
BASICALLY, THERE JUST MAY NOT BE ENOUGH JOBS TO GO AROUND ANYMORE...BUT WE FEEL CONFIDENT THAT TECHNOLOGY WILL PROVIDE SOME SORT OF SOLUTION...
HEY--THIS IS GREAT! I'M SITTING AT A DESK IN AN OFFICE!
I'M CHATTING WITH MY COWORKERS BY THE WATER COOLER!
I'M OPENING MY VIRTUAL PAYCHECK!
TOM TOMORROW 9-14-93

expensive to treat. Thus, the people who the drug laws are supposed to be helping are discouraged from obtaining medical treatment. All of us pay a greater price as a result, and are put at greater risk of infection from untreated people carrying infectious disease organisms.

More babies are put at risk for death or birth defects as pregnant drug users stay away from pre-natal clinics out of fear of being reported and jailed. Over 25 women have been prosecuted for "delivering' cocaine to their babies. "War on drugs" inspired laws requiring reporting of pregnant drug users, while rationalized as helping to protect babies, actually drive their mothers away from the care that could improve the babies' conditions.

Effect on health care of non-drug users

Public hospital emergency rooms and trauma centers must triage many serious cases because they are overwhelmed with prohibition-fueled gun-shot victims, or with drug overdoses and poisonings. When children are injured on an athletic field, travelers are injured in an automobile accident, a man has a heart attack, or an elderly woman's hip is broken in a fall, when they get to the emergency room with those serious injuries, they often get in line behind the terrible cases that the prohibition anti-drug strategy has helped create.

Research into new psychiatric drugs has been delayed or eliminated because of prohibition. Doctors looking at new research about brain chemistry are discouraged from engaging in research with drugs that affect the senses, moods, or feelings.

Thousands of patients suffer because marijuana, and heroin (used in Britain and Canada as a legal pain reliever) are withheld from patients who could benefit from them, in order to send political messages about anti-drug positions.

Effect of prisons on health

The 'war on drugs" has filled America's prisons with young black men. Nationally, one in four black men age 20 to 29 are in prison, or on probation or parole. In California, it is one in three such men. In DC it is 2 in 5 such men. The "prisonization" of young black men consigns them to a status of permanent underemployment, at best. From a public health standpoint, tuberculosis in prison is now presenting a crisis in institutions such as the prisons operated by the Department of Corrections in the City of New York. 16% of the women and 17% of the men

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entering the New York City prison system are infected with tuberculosis [although] not necessarily active cases. 115,000 persons are admitted to the city's prison system annually.

Many thoughtful observers argue that the only alternative to prohibition is "legalization," modeled after either the free-market, or some modification thereof, such as the current alcohol models. But advocates for legalization have offered almost no detailed proposals. For the time being, I suggest that the nation reconceptualize our goal in drug policy to one of "managing the drug problems." Identify the specific harms from drug abuse that are most serious and implement strategies to minimize them, and dispense with such characterizations as "sending the wrong message."

NAFTA & the incorporation of America

• After the NAFTA vote was safely over, the *Washington Post's* media critic Howard Kurtz wrote a piece pointing out the predominance of pro-NAFTA voices among his colleagues. He cited a four month study by the media watchdog FAIR that found the *Post* and the *New York Times* quoted three times as many NAFTA supporters as opponents. He then quoted Sen. Byron Dorgan of North Dakota as having calculated the length of the *Post's* pro-NAFTA editorials and op-ed pieces since January at 63 feet. That was compared with eleven feet anti-NAFTA commentary.

Dorgan said that "the *Post* [and other papers] prefer to portray us as a bunch of backwards folks who just pulled into town in a pickup truck" while NAFTA backers are "always described as visionaries, statesmen and deep thinkers."

Post editorial page editor Meg Greenfield told Kurtz: "On this rare occasion when columnists of the left, right and middle are all in agreement . . . I don't believe it is right to create an artificial balance where none exists."

What both Kurtz and Greenfield forgot to mention was that Dorgan had tried without success to get his comments into the *Post* before the NAFTA vote, either as an article or a letter, but was rebuffed.

• Although there was a great deal of talk about job losses as a result of NAFTA, one of the agreement's greatest effects will be to put downward pressure on American wages. The machinists' union, which says it has already lost 300,000 jobs to foreign competition, claims that employers are already saying that the union must give concessions or they will move to Mexico.

• One of those who was able to get into the *Post* was Ralph Nader, who wrote: "Everything NAFTA touches becomes more autocratic and less democratic. From its morbidly secretive conception by corporate lobbyists and their Bush administration allies, to the fast-track procedural straitjacket that prohibits amendments to NAFTA, to the decisions by the inaccessible international tribunals that are alien to this country's jurisprudential practices, NAFTA diminishes US democracy."

• It turns out that NAFTA supporters were worried about job loss, too -- but only one. In a strange editorial on Nov. 14 the *New York Times* said that "after weighing the economic pros and cons, NAFTA comes out slightly ahead." So why all the excitement? For the future shape of Latin American relations and "the vitality of the Clinton Presidency." The same day NAFTA pit bull Al Gore said that a defeat would be "catastrophic" to the Clinton presidency.

• Economist Lester Thurow offers this cheery insight: "America is now a First World economy with a large, growing Third World economy in its midst. The First World part will benefit from integration. It is complementary with Mexico. Unfortunately, the Third World part of the US economy is fundamentally competitive . . . If businesses can hire Third World skills elsewhere, why should they pay more for Third World skills just because the people with those skills happen to be found in a First World country, the United States?"

David Morris of the Institute for Local-Self-Reliance calls free trade "the first global religion," which has only one commandment: "Thou Shalt Put No Obstacles in the Way of Any Resource Flow." The effect? Morris cites the Swiss economist Paul Bairoch who says that in 1750 per capita GNP was about the same in both developed and undeveloped countries. In 1930 the ratio was about four to one in favor of the developed nations. Today it is over eight to one.

• FAIR's examination of the *Times* and the *Post* produced some other interesting results. For example, between April and July only 6 out of 201 sources (3%) quoted on NAFTA were environmentalists. No labor union officials were quoted and representatives of *all* public interest or civic action groups -- whether for or against the treaty -- were quoted only 7% of the time. This didn't stop the *Times* from proclaiming in August that business groups were stepping up their efforts for NAFTA "after months of letting unions and environmental groups dominate the debate."

FAIR found that over half the sources in each paper were with the government, another 11% were with the Mexican and Canadian governments and 13% were with

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corporations. Overall, two-thirds of the quoted sources had pro-NAFTA positions and only 20% were opposed.

• One of the sagest commentaries about NAFTA was by the *Boston Globe's* Steven Stark in September. Stark pointed out that the split between the country's establishment and its outsiders may be more cogent than that between Republicans and Democrats. NAFTA, said Stark, was "the quintessential Establishment cause." The political problem is that all presidential elections since 1976 have been won by the candidate who portrayed himself as an outsider, a trick Reagan managed to accomplish even when seeking his second term. Clinton, who ran as an outsider, proceeded to alienate liberal and conservative populists in a variety of ways: supporting gays in the military, the $200 haircut, hanging out with Hollywood stars, and finally with NAFTA. What's more, wrote Stark two months before the vote, if NAFTA passes, Clinton and the treaty "will be blamed for every weakness in the economy for years to come."

• Back in April, Jeff Faux of the Economic Policy Institute also warned about the political implications of NAFTA. Writing to a number of Clinton's key aides, Faux argued, "The international trade people in the administration are steering the president off a political cliff. . . Policy aside, this is clearly a big loser."

• On the other hand, NAFTA presents the Republicans with some political hassles as well. Republican pollster Neil Newhouse suggested that the GOP backing of NAFTA might sour former Reagan Democrats. But Republican House member Jack Kingston told the *Washington Times,* "Outside the Beltway, people will remember only that Clinton passed NAFTA. They won't remember it as a bipartisan deal."

• From Jerry Brown: "Under both NAFTA and GATT, we will be subjected to a super-government of distant and non-elected trade experts, whose narrow frame of reference has nothing of the robust diversity of democratic participation."

• Lance Compa of the National Lawyers Guild points out that "whole chapters of NAFTA are given over

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Your editor's new book on the causes and cures of Clintonism, *Shadows of Hope*, will be published in April by Indiana University Press. The book not only critiques the Clinton administration, but describes the disintegration of American politics and various responses to it. The author also gives a concise proposal for a politics of devolution -- explaining how we can return individuals and communities to the center of American political life.

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to the rights of agribusiness, investors, corporate executives, bankers, owners of intellectual property and other commercial interests -- while there is a total absence of provisions promoting, or even recognizing worker rights as a factor in continental trade." NAFTA "carefully defines intellectual property rights and follows these definitions by swift, tough enforcement mechanisms, with violators subject to punitive damages, injunctive relief, sanctions against due process violations etc. In contrast, NAFTA is silent on the right of association, organizing, collective bargaining, forced labor, child labor, minimum wages, workplace health and race or sex discrimination."

- Says Jim Hightower, "Consider this: the average manufacturing wage in Mexico is a buck eighty-five. The average wage US companies pay down there is 63 cents -- $29 a week. They're going to buy a Buick from us on that? Our companies aren't creating consumers in Mexico; they're creating serfs."
- For the record, here are the environmental groups that plugged for NAFTA -- all of them recipients of funds from corporations doing business in Mexico: National Audobon, Nature Conservancy, National Wildlife Federation, The World Wildlife Fund, Environmental Defense Fund, Natural Resources Defense Council and Defenders of Wildlife. According to Public Citizen, the World Wildlife Fund got $250,00 from Kodak in 1992. The NRDC is partly backed by the Bank of America and so forth.
- You may have noticed that towards the end of the battle over NAFTA, proponents began de-emphasizing economic arguments and started claiming that killing NAFTA would undermine American foreign policy. Why the sudden surge of interest in geo-politics, the new aura of a foreign policy crisis? According to Thomas L. Friedman in the *New York Times,* "The shift in emphasis is in part a campaign tactic. White House polling experts are convinced that public and Congress tend to defer more to the President on foreign policy issues than they do on domestic or economic ones."

In this enterprise the White House received the assistance of Henry Kissinger who declared that NAFTA was "the single most important decision that the American Congress is going to make in foreign policy in the term of President Bill Clinton. . . I don't look at NAFTA as a trade agreement. I look at NAFTA as a new political orientation for the United States." If so, it is a new orientation that Congress doesn't get to amend.

- While Al Gore made Ross Perot look bad during their TV debate, it wasn't because Gore made many substantive points in defending NAFTA. Rather it was the result of a deliberate -- and successful -- attempt to get H. Ross rattled and annoyed. Rep. Mike Synar, who played the part of Perot in the Gore debate warm-ups told the *Baltimore Sun* that Perot "doesn't like to be interrupted, so we practiced doing that. We wanted to get him ired pretty early."
- Bernie Sanders, the independent congressmember from Vermont, has introduced legislation to harmonize downward the pay of members of the House to the level of that of Mexican legislators. The result would be a $98,000 pay-cut.
- Finally, it was left to that word stylist to the political stars, David Broder, to tell us what the debate was really about. He said that NAFTA opponents were "dramatizing a decade-long struggle to determine whether the Democratic Party will speak for the losers or the winners in the rapidly changing American economy and society." Among the former, Broder included blacks, women, union members and older Democrats -- "unfortunate, unhappy people" in the words of one 1984 focus group participant cited by Broder.

Still, since Clinton won NAFTA with the support of 75% of the Republicans in the House but only 40% of the Democrats, Broder admits that Clinton hasn't brought his party around to his way of thinking yet.

Meanwhile, the head of the Democratic Abandonship Council says he's looking forward to turning his organization into a "geopolitical force," whatever that is. Not content with Clinton's corporatist trade policies and his austerity budget, Al Frum says, "We see ourselves as a movement to change government" pulling it away from liberalism.

WEATHER REPORT

Just politics

- New Zealanders have approved a German-style mixed-member system for its legislature, under which some representatives will be elected by districts and others by proportional representation.
- The Green mayor of Cordova, Alaska, Charles Weaverling, lost reelection by 2 votes. He was the only Green mayor in the US. Meanwhile ten Libertarians won local posts in the fall elections.
- Jesse Jackson told the *New York Times* that there was new interest in qualifying the Rainbow Coalition as a political party.
- Roxanne Qualls, a supporter of preference voting, has been elected mayor of Cincinnati.
- North Carolina legislators have voted to fund a study of the use of alternative voting systems.
- South Africa has adopted proportional representation for its April 1994 election. There will be a five percent national threshold.

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Mediacracy

The bestowal by establishment institutions of memberships or fellowships upon members of the media can have a remarkably taming effect on the latter.

Usually, this is done discreetly, but in the October 30, 1993, issue of the *Washington Post*, Richard Harwood identified journalistic participation in the Council on Foreign Relations, "whose members are the nearest thing to a ruling establishment in America."

The officials who are members -- including the President, six cabinet members, David Gergen -- would hardly surprise one familiar with this citadel of conventional wisdom. Nor the fact that two out of three members live in either Washington or New York. Nor that ex-presidents, corporate CEOs, university presidents and the like pad the list.

What is a bit startling, however, is that more than ten percent of the membership of this ideological cavalry for establishment foreign policy are journalists. Included as directors over the past 15 years have been names like Hedley Donovan and Strobe Talbott of *Time*, Elizabeth Drew of the *New Yorker*, and Philip Geyelin of the *Washington Post*. Members include Dan Rather, Tom Brokaw, Jim Lehrer, Charles Krauthammer, William Buckley, and George Will. According to Harwood, seven editors of the *Washington Post* as well as Katherine Graham belong as do three editors of the *New York Times*.

One might suppose that given the media's discouragement of gay and minority journalists participating in marches and demonstration, that Harwood's piece was intended as a self-critical expose. Far from it. He writes:

> The membership of these journalists . . . is an acknowledgment of their active and important role in public affairs and of their ascension into the American ruling class. They do not merely analyze and interpret foreign policy for the United States; they help make it. . .

The Statehood Papers

Twenty years of writing about the DC statehood movement by *Progressive Review* editor Sam Smith. Gives arguments for DC statehood, reviews history of the nation's capital colony and describes the struggle for self-government. Useful to anyone involved in the DC statehood movement. $10 from Progressive Review, 1739 Conn Ave. NW, Washington DC 20009. (DC residents: please add 60 cents sales tax)

Drug busts

- Clinton's drug boss, Lee Brown claims drug legalization would be "genocide." So how's the approach that he favors doing? Well, Brown told a coalition of anti-drug organizations in November that "overall the drug situation remains grim and shows signs of becoming even worse."
- Colombia's attorney general has a different take. Gustavo de Greiff Restrepo told an international conference on drugs that "the war on drugs is a lost battle. It has been fought on the interdiction level and it has failed. . . The profits are so large that it is a delusion to think that jailing or killing major traffickers will result in a [smaller amount of drugs] in the market. . . .In the end, the only solution is legalization, with regulations to control the market."
- In 1992, emergency room incidents for heroin users in Washington DC climbed above 1988 levels.

Nation of laws

According to the *New York Times*, Justice Clarence Thomas told two of his law clerks that he intends to stay on the Supreme Court until 2034: "The liberals made my life miserable for 43 years, and I'm going to make their lives miserable for 43 years."

Health

- One of the things that much of the media doesn't tell you about the health care debate is that the nation's largest consumer organization, Consumers Union, favors the single-payer approach. Writing to the *New York Times*, CU president Rhoda H. Karpatkin pointed out that under single-payer:

> Consumers would be guaranteed the federal package of comprehensive benefits and would not need to select an insurance plan. They would retain their right to choose where they will go for health care, and which doctors and hospitals will provide it. From a consumer perspective, it makes very good sense for stats to exercise the single-payer option. by curtailing the role of private insurance companies, a single-payer system dramatically streamlines health-care administration. State-based, single-payer systems would save money, reduce paperwork and avoid the cost shifting that is so rampant in the complicated system we have now. The bottom line is that states should not just be permitted to adopt a single-payer system -- they should be encouraged to do it. A nation single-payer system . . . would be even better.

Eco-notes

- Writing the in *Utne Reader*, Paul Hawken, co-founder of Smith & Hawken, argues that "if every company on the planet were to adopt the environmental and social practices of the best companies -- of, say, the Body Shop, Patagonia, and Ben and Jerry's -- the world would still be moving toward environmental degradation and collapse."

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Loose change

• Some 10,000 Japanese die annually from karoshi according to a group dedicated to aiding victims of the illness. A year ago a Japanese executive died of karoshi, one of the first time it had effected a white collar worker. His family got the equivalent of nearly a quarter million dollars in compensation from the government, as did 30 other families. Karoshi is sudden death caused by overwork. You can even get an insurance policy against it.

• Michael Milken is teaching business classes at UCLA. The school's associate dean, Carol Scott, told the *Los Angeles Times* that the value of Mr. Milken's experience outweighed any controversy his appointment might engender: "What Milken did in the whole junk bond period really did change the face of corporate America, and I don't think there is any more dramatic way of learning about history than having one of its central participants there." Pacific News correspondent Leonce Gauter suggested that the Menendez brothers might now be considered for professorships in the sociology of the family and that Strom Thurmond might teach a course on African Americans Studies.

Furthermore. . .

• The Postal Service -- which is $1.3 billion in debt and has recently laid off 30,000 workers -- is spending $7 million to replace its corporate logo on vehicles, in post offices and on mailboxes. Says Lizbeth Dobbins who is -- honest -- the USPS's director of corporate identity: "We are a viable communications agency, and it's critical that we prepare for the 21st century by updating our image with a 21st century look."

• You may have noticed how public figures who get into trouble increasingly apologize for some peripheral aspect of the matter under concern: "I wish to apologize for any discomfort and the perception of insensitivity that my having murdered my wife may have caused." You think we're kidding? Here is a flack for Associate Director of the US Marshalls, G. Wayne Smith, after he was caught telling an oafish joke about Ms. Clinton at a law enforcement appreciation dinner: "He deeply regrets any distraction his remark may have caused."

IDEA MILL

There is a new group called Maine Businesses for Social Responsibility aimed at encouraging what Tom Chappel, president of Tom's of Maine, calls "common good capitalism." Tom's encourages workers to volunteer, it donates ten percent of its profits to charity, refuses to test its products on animals and won't use artificial flavorings. The new business organization has adopted a code for its members that includes profit sharing plans for employees, donations to charities and advocacy groups, recycling and energy conservation programs, and eliminating discrimination based on sexual orientation (other forms of discrimination are already prohibited by law)

Rep. Lucien Blackwell has introduced legislation calling for a 30-hour workweek. Blackwell would also force employers to pay double salary for overtime to avoid the current situation in which firms find it cheaper to work employees on overtime then to pay recruiting, benefit and other costs involved with a new worker.

Meanwhile there appears to be growing interest in a shorter workweek in France. Reported the *New York Times*, "the country has suddenly become obsessed by a revolutionary idea: a wholesale switch to a four-day workweek that would, its proponents insist, slash unemployment, improve family life and bring new hope to a disenchanted society." The campaign is being driven by the slogan: WORK LESS AND EVERYBODY WORKS.

One proposal is for a four-day, 33-hour workweek, with a five percent reduction in salary but a projected 10% increase in the workforce. Right now the shortest work-hours in the industrialized countries are found in Germany: 37 hours with six weeks of paid vacation.

This issue has come to the fore yet in America, but it seems almost inevitable to become one of the country's major issues in the near future. *Those interested in this issue can join the Society for the Reduction of Human Labor, 1610 East College Street, Iowa City, IA 52245. Memberships are $25 as is a book on the subject,* Nonfinancial Economics, *by Eugene McCarthy and William McGaughey, also available from SRHL.*

The *Urban Ecologist* reports that a growing number of the nation's 39,000 shopping centers are being torn down and converted to housing or mixed use developments. The trend, estimates the Real Estate Research Corporation, will eventually effect 10-15% of the country's malls.

Back in the 1970s, the *Review's* predecessor, the *DC Gazette,* proposed that bus drivers be given remote control devices to gain priority over stoplights and thus speed up mass transit. Now comes word that the Maryland Transit Authority has been experimenting with just such a system on a ten-mile route. Initial results show that bus preemption can save up to 18% of travel time. The drivers'

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zapper allows a green light to be extended to up to one minute.

Thirty years ago, reports the Transportation Exchange, residents in Delft, Holland, reconstructed their neighborhood street in the middle of the night with picks and shovels, creating an extended front yard where children could play. The idea, dubbed a *woonerf* , has caught on and has been given legal status. They are now part of a range of traffic calming projects that include narrower widths, different paving, speed bumps, tree plantings and other methods.

FIELD NOTES

READING

Prohibition's Second Failure. By Theodore R. Vallance. The National Drug Strategy Network describes this book as an "excellent overview of and introduction to the current state of drug policy in America." *Praeger, Box 5007, Westport CT 06881. 203-226-3571*

Initiative and Referendum Update: New newsletter covering attempts to get states to adopt laws permitting initiatives. Currently 23 states have such provisions. Rep. Peter Hoekstra has introduced proposed US constitutional amendments to permit initiatives and referenda at the national level. *Write I&R Update, c/o Charles Roda, 670 N. Terrace Ave #4B, Mt. Vernon NY 10522.*

The Coalition for Free & Open Elections: Is suing Oklahoma over its refusal to permit write-in votes. *New address: CFOE, Box 470296, San Francisco CA 94147.*

What Works: Air Pollution Solutions: 69 effective local ideas to reduce air pollution. Key information provided on transit and bike programs as well as education programs. *$17 per copy (or free with $25 membership) from Environmental Exchange, 1930 18th St. NW #24, DC 20009*

GROUPS

The Environmental Exchange: A source for information on various new environmental projects. Its Transportation Exchange Project serves a similar function for new transportation ideas. *EE, 1930 18th St NW #24, DC 20009 (202-387-2182)*

Linking Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities with Transit. 150-page report including ideas used in Europe, Japan and various US cities. *$18 from Campaign for New Transportation Priorities, 900 2nd NE, DC 20002*

ROADSIGNS

Drugs

Number of Grateful Dead fans in prisons: 2000

Number of federal agencies involved in enforcing drug laws in the late 1960s: 2 -- with a budget of less than $10 million.

Number of federal agencies involved in enforcing drug laws now: 54 -- with a budget of $13 billion.

Economics

Weight of the NAFTA agreement: 15 pounds

Number of workers in a Labor Department study of retraining who found new jobs at least 80% of the salary of their old ones: 20%

Number of congressional staffers who went to Mexico on "fact-finding trips" before the NAFTA vote, with all expenses paid by the Mexican government: 87.

Elections

Percent of latinos voting in the first round of the most recent Los Angeles mayoral elections: 4%

Percent of eligible voters who turned out and voted for the winner in the 1992 presidential election: 23%

Last time such a small percentage turned out and voted for the presidential winner: 1824

Number of states in 1992 in which *any* presidential candidate won a majority of the vote: 0

Percent of German Bundestag members elected by proportional representation who are women: 29%

Percent of German Bundestag members elected by district who are women: 7%

Percent of US comprised of women, latinos or blacks: 61%

Percent of US Senate comprised of women, latinos or blacks: 7%

Foreign affairs

Estimated number of children dying each month as a result of the Haitian embargo: 1000

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Government

Percent of whistleblowers who told the GAO that they had faced reprisals because of their revelations of government wrong-doing: 88%

Health

Number of women who die annually of breast cancer: 46,000

Number of men who die annually of prostate cancer: 35,000

Annual government funded research into breast cancer: $197 million

Annual government funded research into prostate cancer: $37 million.

Percent of Americans who think the Clinton health plan should be passed as proposed: 24%

Percent of Americans who think it should be passed after major changes: 50%

Media

Percent of Americans who believe Rush Limbaugh to be intelligent: 71%

Percent of Americans who believe Rush Limbaugh to be obnoxious: 66%

Transportation

Time an average two-car suburban family will spend over a lifetime waiting in traffic jams: 2 years.

Time an average two-car suburban family will spend over a lifetime waiting for red lights: 6 months

Number of bikes owned by the 50,000 residents of Davis, Calif.: 40,000

Percent of Davis workforce who ride bikes to work: 25%

Sources

Drugs: *Relix* magazine, *Nation* **Economics:** *New York Times*, Labor Dept.. *Washington Post* **Elections:** *Washington Post*, Curtis Gans, Center for Voting & Democracy **Foreign Affairs:** Harvard Ctr for Population & Development Studies **Health:** *Men's Health*, Gallup/CNN **Media:** Time **Transportation:** *Transportation Exchange Update, Urban Ecology*

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